

**Special Edition:**

## **Peoples' Uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa**

# Tudeh News



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## **Uproar of the popular movements in the region, and its lessons**

*(Editorial of "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 861, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011)*

Following the collapse of the corrupt and despotic regime of Bin Ali in Tunisia, the uproar of the popular movements in Egypt, Algeria and Yemen shook the pillars of the despotic regimes in the region.

In Egypt, the tyrannical puppet regime of Hosni Mubarak, threatened the people with bloody suppression and death by sending military tanks to the streets, having fighter jets fly over the cities and declaring martial law and curfew in order to save the rotten pillars of the tyrannical regime. Nevertheless, thousands of people are still confronting the suppression apparatus of the regime in the streets of various cities of Egypt.

In Algeria, Jordan and Yemen, as well, tens of thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the continuation of the autocratic and tyrannical regimes and demanded fundamental changes in the governance practices in these countries. Raging floods of popular movements in the region have scared all the oppressive regimes, from Saudi Arabia, Sudan and

Jordan to the theocratic regime of the Supreme Leader in Iran, and have seriously challenged the interests of imperialism.

Scenes of street protests, and the way the unarmed people dealt with the police and armed forces are undoubtedly reminders of the events that occurred in our country in the not so distant past, and led to the bloody and violent suppression of the reform movement. The analysis of the characteristics of the events of recent weeks in our region in order to understand the dynamics of these massive social movements, the role of political and social forces in organizing these movements, and also the tactics adopted in their struggle, can be noteworthy, providing lessons for the future struggle of the popular movement of our country against the theocratic regime.

### **The objective root causes of the popular uprisings in the region**

The analysis of the objective root causes of the popular movements in the region shows the common cause of deep discontent of the masses towards social injustice, the broadening gap between poverty and wealth, and the social ills resulting from severe deprivation. For instance, in Tunisia, part of the demands of the demonstrators was the implementation of a model of development that "will provide and guarantee equal opportunities, right to

work, decent and sensible employment opportunities, and steady income to afford the basic needs of the working people.” The demonstrators shouted the slogans: “Bin Ali must go”, “The family of the president must be prosecuted publicly”, and “Yes to bread and water, No to Bin Ali”.

Likewise, in Egypt a major part of the popular discontent was related to the aggravation of the economical deprivation, unemployment, social ills stemming from such circumstances, and the public demand for fundamental changes in the socio-economic orientation of the country and liberation from the deep dependence of the regime on imperialism.

The other common phenomenon that is evident in all of these countries, is the deeply authoritarian and anti-people practice of governance based on which all the policy making levers are concentrated in the hands of a few (the dictator and his inner circle), and the democratic rights and freedoms of the people are severely and brutally violated. For instance, at the peak of the popular upheaval in Tunisia, Bin Ali, like all the other dictators, confessed that he heard the voice of the people’s revolution and in his speech of January 13<sup>th</sup> announced that he would not stand as a candidate in the next presidential election and would guarantee political freedoms and the freedom of media. He called for a “truce” and said: “I understand the demands of the people concerning unemployment, essential needs, and political demand for more freedom.”

The suppression of the rights and freedoms of the people in Egypt, too, has been one of the factors in motivating the people to rise against the ruling dictatorship. It is noteworthy that one of the reasons for the rising political discontent in Egypt has been sham parliamentary elections, very much like the parliamentary elections in Iran last summer, in which the Guardian Council disqualified thousands of candidates, including a large number of dissident and reformist candidates, and denied them the

opportunity to participate in the elections. The Communist Party of Egypt evaluated and analyzed the context of the events and noted that: “The results of the electoral farce confirmed the correctness of our Party’s position and its call, last July, for the boycott of the elections, along with a number of opposition forces and the National Association for Change. In fact, the almost absolute hegemony by the ruling party and the unprecedented dwarfing of the forces of opposition in the parliament confirms that we are facing a new phase in which a complete and undisguised dictatorship of a band of capitalists and those involved in corruption and bribery dominates. This dictatorship, with the direct support of the security apparatus and police, is set to destroy the limited pluralism, media and democratic margin that exists, preparing the ground for the process of hereditary rule or extending Mubarak’s term in power as president.”

### **The united action of the social forces in battling the dictatorship**

One of the characteristics of the recent protests of the people in the region has been the solidarity and united action of the social forces in battling the dictatorship, and in particular, the significant and powerful role of the movement of the working people and the working class.

For instance, the victorious rally of the Tunisian people on January 14<sup>th</sup> against Bin Ali’s regime was organized by the UGTT, the Tunisian General Labour Union, which has more than 300,000 members. On that day, the Union also organized a two-hour symbolic strike in the capital city. From the start of the people’s demonstrations back in December, the UGTT supported the movement’s demands and encouraged the wide participation of the labour unions in the protests.

In Egypt the working class and its political forces have had an outstanding role in mobilizing the public and advancing the

struggle of the masses. In recent days we witnessed the solidarity of the workers with the protesting demonstrators and the indefinite strike of the steel workers in Suez. These workers declared that they would continue their strike until Hosni Mubarak, the president of the country, is overthrown. The widely united action of the social forces, the presence of the powerful civil organizations, and also the anti-reactionary fronts of a broad spectrum of progressive and freedom-loving forces, along with objective and tangible struggle slogans with special attention to the elimination of economic and social injustice and defending the demands of the oppressed and disadvantaged masses, as well as active participation of the working people and the working class in the struggle, have undoubtedly had an effective role in the success of the current movements, which should be considered by the freedom-loving and progressive forces in our country.

The current struggle of our people against the despotic theocratic regime [of Iran] revolves around various economic, social and political issues and has interesting parallels with the popular movements in the region. This year, our people would commemorate the thirty-second anniversary of the victory of the February revolution at a time when a major part of the socio-economic demands of the revolution, including the move toward social justice, was not achieved; and the freedom that emerged on the ruins of monarchy was soon destroyed and replaced with the medieval rule of the theocratic regime of the Supreme Leader. Today, Iran is a country captive in the claws of a dictatorship, in which a large section of its citizens - even to the admission of the regime leaders - are grappling with unprecedented poverty and deprivation, and social ills resulting from economic deprivation have engulfed the country. Despite all these hardships and oppression, the regime has been able to remain in power through the violent and bloody suppression of social and individual freedoms. Disunity

among political forces, the absence of a plan of action for the struggle that would reflect the broad demands of the oppressed people of our country (and not only the tactical and transient slogans like "where is my vote?"), vacillation of some political forces, particularly those who have separated from the ruling regime, and illusions about the "reform-ability" of the principle of the absolute autocracy, as well as the scattered struggles of the working class, are among the weaknesses from which the popular movement in our country has been suffering in recent years.

The same way that the Middle East region is going through a determining period, our country has a tense and eventful period ahead of it, in spite of the seemingly calm political climate. On one hand, the economic sanctions and the risk of foreign intervention threaten Iran, and on the other hand the people are faced with a suppressive regime whose response to the smallest steps of people toward gaining their basic rights is prison, torture, exile and execution. Meanwhile, the rulers of this very murderous regime are fighting with each other to plunder the national wealth belonging to the people. The growing rate of unemployment, closure of factories that even when operating were not very productive, implementation of neoliberal economic policies, unbridled privatization, and the carrying out the so-called plan of "targeted subsidies", have all created a very tragic situation one of whose possible consequences could be a social explosion. In the past and recent years, the powerful movement of women and the heroic movement of the students have marked impressive resistances in the political scene of the country, which is still going on. We believe that in the current situation, the movement of the labour and working people is ready to play a more effective role in the developments of the country, if it is mobilized and organized.

Our party has always been of the opinion that any and every window of opportunity- even within the framework of the medieval regime [of Iran] - should be utilized to advance the popular movement. While adhering to this view, we also insist that the recent historic experience of our people since the June of 97 [when the reformist president Khatami was elected] has shown that fundamental, democratic and stable reforms are not possible within the framework of the theocratic regime of the Supreme Leader. What is certain, is that the leaders of the regime know very well that the protest movement of the masses that erupted the very next day after the electoral coup of June 12<sup>th</sup> of 2009, still lives strong despite the bloody and violent suppression by the regime, and is awaiting an opportunity to once again challenge the ruling despotism in our country directly. That is why Khamenei and the leaders of the regime are determined not to allow the liberation and protest movement of the people against the military coup rise again from the ashes of inevitable retreats, and threaten the survival of the regime. The struggle of the million-strong masses in the past year and a half contained valuable experience in finding the proper short- and long-term strategies to combat the theocratic regime.

The storm of the popular movements that is sweeping the Middle East region, is a serious warning for all the anti-people and despotic regimes, and carries a strong message about the power of the united action of the people in the battle against dictatorships. The lessons of these popular movements and the outstanding role of the workers and working people united with other social forces, and actions of freedom-loving and progressive forces towards unity, is a valuable lessons that we all must learn from.

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***Tudeh Party of Iran:***

## **Solidarity with the movement of the Tunisian people**

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*(Excerpts from Editorial of "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran No. 860, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011)*

**O**n January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Tudeh Party of Iran expressed its militant solidarity with the movement of the Tunisian people. The Party's extensive analysis which was published in its central organ was in firm support of the continuing protest movement of the Tunisian people for deep democratic changes in the country's political life, for reforms serving the interests of the people, and for job creation and elimination of poverty. The Party's analysis states: "After close to a month of continuing popular unrest, with the waves of protests reaching the capital on January 12<sup>th</sup> and the government's failure to respond to the demands of the working people, along with the continuation of violence by the police and security and military forces which opened fire on the demonstrators, led to a point that within a mere five historic days between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of January, the disgraceful file of the corrupt president and the dictator of the country was closed. These demonstrations, during which close to a hundred people were killed and many others were injured, constituted the most serious challenge that Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, the country's ousted president, had faced during his 23 years in power. The unprecedented demonstrations in Tunisia- the country's capital- on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, and the general strike of the workers on that day, forced the government of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia's dictator, to step down, and made him and his family to flee the country and take refuge in Saudi Arabia.



The rally on Friday January 14<sup>th</sup> was organized by the UGTT, the Tunisian General Labour Union, which has more than 300,000 members. On that day, the Union also organized a two-hour symbolic strike in the capital city. From the start of the people's protest demonstrations back in December, the UGTT supported the movement's demands and encouraged the wide participation of the labour unions in the protests. Expressing its solidarity with the Tunisian people, the UGTT had supported the demonstrators' demands based on formulating and implementing a model of development which "will provide and guarantee equal opportunities, right to work, decent and sensible employment opportunities, and steady income to afford the basic necessities of the working people."

Following the dictator fleeing the country, a state of emergency was declared and the Tunisian Prime Minister announced that he would form a surrogate government.

The Tudeh Party of Iran has consistently opposed the oppressive policies of the government and the ruling regime in Tunisia and has expressed, on various occasions, its solidarity with the working people and progressive and democratic forces of that country. At the *Humanité* Festival in Paris in September of 2010, during a meeting between the delegation of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran and comrade Abdolaziz Masaoud, member of the Politburo of Altajdid Movement and the editor in chief of its central organ, a

comprehensive exchange of ideas concerning the events in the two countries took place. The representatives of both parties once again met and discussed the current events in the two countries, during the twenty-first congress of Cypress' AKEL in late November in Nicosia. During these meetings, the Tudeh Party of Iran reiterated its resolute support for the movement of the people and the popular and progressive forces of Tunisia for better life, democracy and social justice.

Conveying the satisfaction of the working people and the popular forces of Iran with the demise of the Tunisian dictatorship, we wish greater victories for the working people of Tunisia towards establishing a democratic, popular and progressive regime in that country. The Tudeh Party of Iran expresses its international solidarity with the just struggle of the Tunisian working people, communists and progressive forces.

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## **Egypt's dictator hears the voice of revolution very late!**

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**T**he new era of the struggle of people's movement of the countries of North Africa which started last month in Tunisia, in its path is now challenging the political regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Yemen and Jordan. Tunisia's dictator relinquished power two weeks ago and sought refuge in Saudi Arabia. The developments in this country are progressing towards creating a democratic republic based on the will of the working masses. The struggle in Egypt, the most populous African country with more than 80 million people, has taken great strides over the last week in bringing to an

end the long history of the ruling dictatorial regime. The news from the Egyptian people's movement over the last three days, January 28-30, indicate that Hosni Mubarak, the leader of the dictatorial regime and the lackey of the United States imperialism, just as his Iranian counterpart in February 1979, has heard the message of the people's revolution only when the wrath of the masses in their demands for economic, social and political rights has reached the doorsteps of the presidential palace.

The people, despite the presence of military forces in the streets and the announcement of emergency conditions, have disregarded the laws prohibiting assembly in public places and have continued their demonstrations. Based on the latest news, until now (Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>), the security forces have killed 102 demonstrators. Tens of thousands of demonstrators have gathered in central Cairo and have demanded the resignation of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's President. The steel workers in Suez have gone on strike and have declared that they would continue their strike until Mubarak's overthrow.

The events of recent days have demonstrated that Egypt's working masses desire fundamental changes in the economic, social and political conditions of the country. The people consider as ineffective the deceitful efforts of the regime in blocking their path of struggle for reaching their rightful goal of democracy and social justice.



The Tudeh Party of Iran firmly supports the heroic struggle of the Egyptian masses for fundamental reforms in their country's political, economic and social system, for an end to the corrupt dictatorship dependent on American imperialism and for attaining true democracy, human rights and social justice. We condemn the violent backlash of the security and police forces that have so far led to the killing of over 100 demonstrators. The Egyptian regime has shown once again its true nature to the world by declaring martial law, dispatching the military to the streets, sending the security forces to confront the masses, and also stopping the mass communication system, such as cell phones, email and the internet, completely and comprehensively. Of particular interest are the ambivalent statements by the US and European Union policy makers who, in advancing their strategic interests and supporting their puppets, have shirked from taking an unequivocal stance in support of people's movement for reforms, the toppling of the dictatorial regime and passage to real democracy. The United States has practically supported continuation of the present regime.

Despite the repression and the anti-people and savage actions of the dictatorial regime, we are of the belief that through unity of action and close ties with the masses, worker organizations and social movements, the progressive and democratic forces in Egypt can guide this unprecedented uprising to its rightful conclusion. They can also safeguard the victories and gains of this uprising from the backward and reactionary forces, as well as elements of the European and US imperialism.

Victory to the heroic struggle of the people, working masses and progressive and democratic forces of Egypt!

**31 January 2011**

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